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THE RATIONALISM
OF
METAPHYSICS.





G. P. J.

SUPPLEMENT

TO

THEOLOGY

AND

SCIENCE OF GOVERNMENT.

Being a Review of a Book

BY

IMMANUEL KANT,

CALLED

CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON.

BY

KUKLOS

(JOHN HARRIS.)

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SUPPLEMENT
TO THEOLOGY AND THE SCIENCE OF
GOVERNMENT.

ON THE RATIONALISM OF METAPHYSICS.

Being a review of a book called KANT's *Critique of Pure Reason*.*

In noticing this book, bringing it again, perhaps, prominently before the public, and calling attention particularly to certain passages in it; we do so under protest. We protest against any supposition that the book in a correct sense belongs to science; or that it has in itself any value to recommend its reconsideration by the public. On the contrary, we hold it to be a harmful, baneful book which has been and still is, directly and indirectly, potent for mischief.

In examining and objecting to this book, however, it is not to it only, but to the class of books, doctrines, and opinions which belong to it and to which it belongs. We do not suppose that the ordinary student, or the man of ordinary education, is in much risk of directly confounding himself by the serious endeavour to study and comprehend this work as a part of legitimate science. We feel sure that the perusal of a few pages by a person whose mind is in a naturally healthy condition must usually produce a degree of mental nausea sufficient to protect the ordinary individual from direct injury; but it by no means follows that such person is not individually interested in the book, and that he may not receive injury of the most serious description from it.

* *Critique of Pure Reason*,
BY IMMANUEL KANT,

Henry G. Bohn, London, 1860.

} Translated from the German
By J. M. D. Meiklejohn.

Let us consider, with some attention, one way out of several in which he may receive serious injury. A teacher of some department of knowledge, such as physical science, has by the evidence of superior ability, by the clearness of his explanations, by his sincerity, industry, skill and sagacity, gained the confidence of a number of persons, it may be, of all the members of a scientific society, or, perhaps, his reputation may have extended throughout the town or, even, the whole country to which he belongs, or, it may be, that he has earned a world-wide renown, and his name has become recognized throughout the world of education and civilization as of a man whose teaching is authoritative, whose credentials are such as to place his propositions almost above controversy, and such that his certified examination and approval of a doctrine is sufficient of itself to strongly recommend to the student the acceptance of that doctrine.

Let us suppose that such teacher has directed his attention especially to one department of Natural Science, to physics, for instance, or some other one department, but has investigated and acquired knowledge in other departments of Natural Science also. Having attained his reputation as a teacher of great ability, he becomes desirous to still further extend the area of his knowledge and thereby his ability to instruct: and he proceeds to commence the study of Ideal Science, to which he has hitherto paid scarcely any attention. Now comes the important question. . . . Does his science securely rest upon the fundamental basis of sound science; that is, upon the primary facts of natural and revealed theology? If not, we say that such an one is in even greater danger than the intelligent young lad eager for the acquisition of knowledge whose mind is allowed to wander, unguided and unprotected, amongst the snares and pitfalls of unsound ideal science. When such a man brings his mind deliberately to the consideration of some system

of metaphysics, whether it be a modification of Kant's transcendental system or some other, he will not allow his mind to be repelled from the study by a mere repugnance or distaste in the first instance. And besides, his previously acquired knowledge and experience spares him the necessity of much of the labour which would have to be undergone by the inexperienced student, for the latter to assimilate the strange doctrines, and to become possessed of them as a part of his own knowledge.

But the man is a justly renowned teacher. The false and mischievous doctrines, having mingled in the alembic of his mind with the truths and facts of Natural Science, do not come forth in the same nauseous state in which they are presented in such a work as Kant's Critique; they now have all the advantages of the persuasive speech, trained skill, earnestness and experience of the teacher himself, and thus the noxious doctrines, disguised by truths to which they seem to belong, are rendered acceptable to the unguarded mind of the student.

We will commence with an analytical examination of that which, assuming the work to have any pretension to scientific arrangement, must be considered the commencement proper of the treatise. This will be found at page 212, under the following heading:

"Of Pure Reason, the seat of the Transcendental Illusory appearance."

A.

OF REASON IN GENERAL.

"All our knowledge begins with sense, proceeds thence to understanding, and ends with reason, beyond which nothing higher can be discovered in the human mind for elaborating the matter of intuition and subjecting it to the highest unity of thought. At this stage of our enquiry it is my duty to give an explanation of this, the highest faculty of cognition, and I confess I find myself here in some difficulty. Of reason, as of the understanding, there is a merely formal, that is, logical use, in which it makes abstraction of all content of

cognition; but there is also a real use, inasmuch as it contains in itself the source of certain conceptions and principles, which it does not borrow either from the senses or the understanding. The former faculty has been long defined by logicians as the faculty of mediate conclusion in contradistinction to immediate conclusions (*consequentiae immediatae*.) But the nature of the latter, which itself generates conceptions, is not to be understood from this definition. Now, as a division of reason into a logical and a transcendental faculty presents itself here, it becomes necessary to seek for a higher conception of this source of cognition which shall comprehend both conceptions. In this we may expect, according to the analogy of the conceptions of the understanding, that the logical conception will give us the key to the transcendental, and that the table of the functions of the former will present us with the clue to the conceptions of reason.

"In the former part of our transcendental logic, we defined the understanding to be the faculty of rules; reason may be distinguished from understanding as the *faculty of principles*.

"The term *principle* is ambiguous, and commonly signifies merely a cognition that may be employed as a principle; although it is not in itself, and as regards its proper origin, entitled to the distinction. Every general proposition, even if derived from experience by the process of induction, may serve as the major in a syllogism; but it is not for that reason a principle. Mathematical axioms (for example, there can be only one straight line between two points,) are general *à priori* cognitions, and are therefore rightly denominated principles, relatively to the cases which can be subsumed under them. But I cannot, for this reason, say that I cognize this property of a straight line from principles. I cognize it only in pure intuition.

"Cognition from principles, then, is that cognition in which I cognize the particular in the general by means of conceptions. Thus every syllogism is a form of the deduction of a cognition from a principle. For the major always gives a conception through which every thing that is subsumed under the condition thereof, is cognized according to a principle. Now, as every general cognition may serve as the major in a syllogism, and the understanding presents us with such general *à priori* propositions, they may be termed principles, in respect of their possible use.

"But if we consider these principles of the pure understanding in

relation to their origin, we shall find them to be anything rather than cognitions from conceptions. For they would not even be possible *a priori*, if we could not rely on the assistance of pure intuition (in mathematics), or on that of the conditions of a possible experience. That everything that happens has a cause, cannot be concluded from the general conception of that which happens; on the contrary, the principle of causality instructs us as to the mode of obtaining from that which happens a determinate empirical conception.

"Synthetical cognitions from conceptions the understanding cannot supply, and they alone are entitled to be called principles. At the same time, all general propositions may be termed comparative principles.

"It has been a long-cherished wish that, (who knows how late) may one day be happily accomplished—that the principles of the endless variety of civil laws should be investigated and exposed; for in this way alone can we find the secret of simplifying legislation. But in this case, laws are nothing more than limitations of our freedom upon conditions under which it subsists in perfect harmony with itself; they consequently have for their object that which is completely our own work, and of which we ourselves may be the cause by means of these conceptions. But how objects, as things in themselves—how the nature of things is subordinated to principles and is to be determined according to conceptions, is a question which it seems well nigh impossible to answer. Be this, however, as it may—for on this point our investigation is yet to be made—it is at least manifest from what we have said, that cognition from principles is something very different from cognition by means of the understanding, which may indeed precede other cognitions in the form of a principle, but in itself—so far as it is synthetical—is neither based upon mere thought, nor contains a general proposition drawn from conceptions alone.

"The understanding may be a faculty for the production of unity of phenomena by virtue of rules; the reason is a faculty for the production of unity of rules (of the understanding) under principles. Reason, therefore, never applies directly to experience, or to any sensuous object; its object is, on the contrary, the understanding, to the manifold cognition of which it gives a unity *a priori* by means of conceptions—a unity which may be called rational unity, and which is of a nature very different from that of the unity produced by the understanding.

"The above is the general conception of the faculty of reason, in so far as it has been possible to make it comprehensible in the absence of examples. These will be given in the sequel."

The very first part of the first sentence: "all our knowledge begins with sense" appears to be in violent contradiction to the general teaching of the work, which sometimes assumes and sometimes purports to demonstrate that knowledge is quite independent of sense, and that sense itself belongs only to one class of effects or consequents, to which intuitions, conceptions, and cognitions, stand in the relation of causes or antecedents.

In the second part of this first sentence, "proceeds thence to understanding, and ends with reason," beyond which nothing can be discovered in the human mind for elaborating the matter of intuition, *understanding* as a mental process or faculty is made to precede reason. Now, this appears to be evidently erroneous in the sense which Kant indirectly attaches to those expressions. Reason is described as the mental process or a part of the process by which the matter of intuition is elaborated, but knowledge (all knowledge is necessarily compound,) whether it be in the form of a statement, proposition or conclusion, cannot be *understood* unless its elements be first arranged by the intellectual faculty of the mind. We neither affirm nor admit that there are any two such distinct processes as reason and understanding, as supposed by Kant; but we say that the meaning of the term understanding, whether it be considered a process, a faculty or anything else, implies that it is subsequent to that process of the intellectual faculty by which the elements of the knowledge are arranged, for it is not an incoherent and disorderly collection of ideas, but the clear and distinct statement which is said to be *understood* as a cognition by the mind. When (compound) knowledge is *understood* by the mind, the whole process of elaborating the matter of intuition (which we think is preferably

expressed as the process of arranging and combining the elements of knowledge) has been completed. It is true the knowledge may be unsound, the process of arranging may have been badly or incompletely performed and the conclusion or cognition, being disapproved by the *judgment* (reason), may require to be rearranged; but this is to undo and to repeat the process, not to elaborate or to carry further the process. We opine, for ourselves, that *understanding* is a term applicable only to compound knowledge, and its use is to express appreciation by the mind that the elements of such compound knowledge have been logically and coherently arranged. If the elements were sufficient and of such kind as to be capable of combining together, then, if the process of arrangement has been complete and perfect, the knowledge (conclusion or cognition) is completely, clearly, and distinctly *understood* by the mind. This is quite an end of the process of elaboration which Kant is here treating of; although it by no means follows that such knowledge is sound, is such that the mind may lawfully accept it, or that, having accepted, may retain it. But this consideration belongs to the relationship between knowledge and the mind; and applies equally to compound knowledge, already combined and complete, presented from without for acceptance by the mind. It is quite a distinct consideration from that of the process of compounding the knowledge from its elements which alone is here brought under consideration by Kant.

Wherefore *if* reason were a process or a part of the process by which the mind compounds the elements or elaborates the elementary matter of knowledge, *reasoning* would necessarily precede *understanding*, not follow it.

The last part of the sentence, "subjecting it to the highest unity of thought," can only become intelligible by a definition of the meaning which it is intended to express by "the highest unity of thought." In the ab-

sence of any definition, we would suggest judgment or reason as the correct expression; but then if Kant means judgment why does he say 'the highest unity of thought?' and reason he has described as something, less high, which has already operated and performed its function before the elaborated matter of intuition is subjected to the highest unity of thought.

"At this stage of our inquiry, it is my duty to give an explanation of this the highest faculty of cognition." After some consideration it appears that the word *this* is intended to apply to reason, we have therefore the definition of *reason* that it is the highest faculty of cognition. Now we say that reason is manifestly not a faculty of cognition; it may be said to be related to or to belong to cognition, but its function is to supervise cognition, to guide, direct and advise the mind in respect to its cognitions. A proposition or conclusion which has been cognized, and is distinctly understood by the mind, may, nevertheless, be unreasonable; therefore reason is not a part of cognition and not a necessity to cognition, but it is quite necessary to the mind in order that the quality and character of its cognitions may be determined; an unreasonable, false, or unsound conclusion in the mind, is a compound cognition which is disapproved by reason.

"Of reason, as of the understanding, there is a merely formal, that is, logical use, in which it makes abstraction of all content of cognition; but there is also a real use, inasmuch as it contains in itself the source of certain conceptions and principles, which it does not borrow either from the senses or the understanding." That is to say, putting the definition of reason just previously given in its place, the highest faculty of cognition makes abstraction of all content of cognition; that is, when used logically. . . . but it also has a real use 'inasmuch as it contains in itself the source of certain conceptions and principles.' There seems to lurk beneath this phrase a

confusion of the elements of knowledge with mental processes operating upon those elements. The elements of knowledge have been spoken of as the matter of intuition, and reason has been described as a faculty of the mind by which this matter is elaborated; are we now to understand that the faculty itself is also the source of the matter (elements) upon which it operates? We say that reason is distinct from the mind, is the intellectual guide and director of the mind, and being such may supply knowledge, or the elements of knowledge, to the mind; but this is very different from affirming reason to be a part of the mental organization, namely a faculty thereof by which the mind elaborates the matter of intuition, and then supposing that the faculty itself generates that matter.

"The former faculty has been long defined by logicians as the faculty of mediate conclusion in contradistinction to immediate conclusions (*consequentiae immediate*); but the nature of the latter, which itself generates conceptions, is not to be understood from this definition." The former of which two faculties? There has been but one faculty spoken of—namely, the highest faculty of cognition, of which a logical use and a real use have been just noted. Putting this difficulty aside, we are told that "the nature of the latter faculty" (qy, the real use of reason) "is not to be understood from this definition. What definition? The mediate conclusion? With respect to the latter faculty, to the nature of which this definition does not apply, we now have the distinct statement that it generates conceptions. . . . (The reader may note that this is almost the only distinct statement as yet made.)"

We will suggest, that perhaps what Kant is here trying to explain, without having first apprehended the conditions of the case himself, is that . . . in the process of compounding knowledge, the intellectual faculty of the mind having combined certain elements into a simple cognition or conclusion, may then take this simple con-

clusion as an element together with other elements, and therewith continue the process of compounding . . . thus obtaining, from the simple-compound, the compound-compound or complex, and so on.

"Now, as a division of reason into a logical and a transcendental faculty presents itself here," We had at first one faculty with a particular use. We were next told of two uses of this one faculty, then we found two faculties, and we now have the faculty dividing itself into two, namely, into a logical and transcendental. "It becomes necessary to seek for a higher conception of this source of cognition which shall comprehend both conceptions." What source of cognition? reason? But reason has been defined to be a faculty, one phase or form of which generates conceptions, and which faculty has divided itself into two, the logical and transcendental. Bearing this in mind it is not apparent to us what conception is referred to by the words 'it is necessary to seek for a higher conception;' surely a faculty which elaborates the matter of intuition, and includes a sub-faculty which generates conceptions, cannot be itself a conception. Yes, it appears that it is, for according to the end of the sentence, the logical and transcendental faculties are both of them conceptions.

"In this we may expect, according to the analogy of the conceptions of the understanding, that the logical conception will give us the key to the transcendental, and that the table of the functions of the former will present us with the clue to the conceptions of reason."

The statement of this expectation assumes (apparently) that the understanding is strictly analogous to reason and divides itself into two faculties each of which is a conception, but further than this we are entirely at a loss; why the logical conception, which is one of the divisions of the faculty of reason, should give us the key to the transcendental conception, which is the other division of the same faculty, we are not told; and, even

if we had the table of the functions of the logical conceptions of the faculty, we should not be hopeful of obtaining thereby a clue to the conceptions of reason, which has been itself reduced to a conception; for, reason was first defined to be a certain faculty, and that faculty is afterwards spoken of as a conception.

By attributing some definite meaning to the various phrases here made use of, these last statements might be made intelligible, and in such a manner a number of persons might understand them as conveying a variety of meanings, each person obtaining a meaning dependent on the sense which he thinks proper to attribute to those expressions. But we do not think that these statements, as they are put before the reader, can be fairly considered to convey any definite intelligible meaning; it is not sufficient to say that other parts of the work may define the sense in which these statements are to be understood because they are, many of them, inconsistent with each other, in any sense, incoherent and almost contradictory.

"In the former part of our transcendental logic, we defined the understanding to be the faculty of rules; reason may be distinguished from understanding as the *faculty of principles*."

We certainly hoped for the moment that we had here a more intelligible definition of what Kant understood by reason, but on looking a little further to find out whether the expression principle was itself defined; we find by the very next sentence that "the term principle is ambiguous and commonly signifies merely a cognition; which may be employed as a principle although it is not in itself, and as regards its proper origin, entitled to the distinction." We are afraid the only interpretation this admits of is that it means, or may be used to mean, just any thing that it suits the metaphysician at the moment to employ it as meaning. We note that here the natural relationship of reason and understanding is in

verted. However vague and indefinite the sense attached by Kant to the expression 'principle' may be, it must be something of the character of a proposition. Now when the question is of reason and understanding, the compound expression 'rules of reasoning' is a sound combination of words and quite intelligible; so, also 'a proposition understood,' or 'a proposition misunderstood' is intelligible, but, the rules of 'understanding' or 'a proposition reasoned' are false verbal combinations belonging to unsense.

"Every general proposition, even if derived from experience by the process of induction, may serve as the major in a syllogism; but it is not for that reason a principle." No? If it was we should at least have a distinct definition of a principle, and thence another definition of reason which would then become a faculty of general propositions, but this would not very well harmonize with the previous definitions as elaborating the matter of intuition, &c., &c. "Mathematical axioms (for example: there can be only one straight line between two points) are general *à priori* cognitions, and are therefore rightly denominated principles, relatively to the cases which can be subsumed under them. But I cannot for this reason say that I cognize this property of a straight line from principles—I cognize it only in pure intuition."

Giving Kant the benefit of a doubt, we are inclined to think this is a confused statement of that which is essentially correct; if, however, we correctly appreciate his meaning in this statement we should prefer to express it somewhat in this manner. 'Mathematical axioms (for example: there can be only one straight line between two points) are compound facts, that is, they are self-demonstrated propositions the absolute truth of which is at once manifest to the mind; they are presented to the mind and accepted by it as a whole with the approval of

reason and without the necessity of any rearrangement or adjustment of their elements.'

"Cognition from principles, then, is that cognition in which I cognize the particular in the general by means of conceptions." But since a principle is an *à priori* cognition, what necessity is there for the conceptions? and where do the conceptions come in? "Thus every syllogism is a form of the deduction of a cognition from a principle." A few sentences back we were told that "cognitions are rightly denominated principles," therefore the syllogism is merely the form of a deduction of a principle from a principle. "For the major always gives a conception, through which everything that is subsumed under the condition thereof is cognized according to a principle."

This statement is too hopelessly vague to allow it to be supposed that Kant himself could have attached any distinct meaning to such combination of words: the reader may, however, here note a glaring instance of the misuse (perversion) of language—namely, "for the major always give a conception." Now a conception belongs to the internal operation of the mind; it belongs to the imagination and to the inner consciousness; a simple conception is a simple idea conceived by the imagination in the mental organization; a compound conception is compounded of ideas generated within the mind; if received from without, as a (compound) cognition, it is not generated within; or, if generated within,* it cannot be received from without. "Through which every thing that is subsumed under the condition thereof is cognized according to a principle." But what is a principle? We have been told the term is ambiguous but have not been told what meaning it is intended to convey. By the next sentence it appears that principles are general propositions presented

* That is, if compounded within the mind from conceptions by the inner consciousness.

to us by the understanding ; but for the understanding to do this, either they must be first presented to the understanding or else they must be generated (conceived) within the understanding, and on this point, namely, whether the principles have any origin outside the understanding, we are uninformed. In this connection we must not forget the definition of *understanding* and *reason* given a few sentences back.—that : understanding is the faculty of rules and reason the faculty of principles. We have therefore, a relationship between reason and understanding here suggested of a very peculiar character, namely ; that the faculty of rules conceives principles of which reason is the faculty. “ Now as every general cognition may serve as the major in a syllogism, and the understanding presents us with such general *à priori* propositions, they may be termed principles, in respect of their possible use.” This sentence again appears to directly contradict the statement made shortly before that a general proposition which may serve as the major of a syllogism was not for that reason a principle ; it seems to be now asserted that it is a principle for that very reason, namely, “ in respect to its possible use as the major of a syllogism.” It is sufficiently evident that the term principle is indeed very ambiguous.

“ But if we consider these principles of the pure understanding in relation to their origin, we shall find them to be anything rather than cognitions from conceptions.”

But we have not been informed as to that origin in relation to which we are to consider them ; we were told just now that they are presented to us by the understanding : therefore whence does the understanding get them ? Because if this origin be in the understanding, they must be conceptions by the understanding ; and if they be cognitions it would seem to follow that they must be cognitions from conceptions ; but we are told that we shall find them to be anything rather than cognitions from conceptions.

"For they would not even be possible *à priori* if we could not rely on the assistance of pure intuition (in mathematics) or in that of the conditions of a possible experience."

The meaning which seemed to be attached to the expression pure intuition, when last used, was that faculty by which the mind at once cognizes or recognizes the truth of a manifest fact when presented to it; but if this be the meaning we do not see why it should not apply to a cognition from a conception; for if a manifest ideal fact be conceived by the inner consciousness, it will be cognized or recognized by the mind just as certainly as if presented from without; the very meaning of the expression 'manifest' is the necessary and unhesitating acceptance of the proposition, as true, by the mind. "That everything that happens has a cause, cannot be concluded from the general conception of that which happens; on the contrary the principle of causality instructs us as to the mode of obtaining from that which happens a determinate empirical conception."

This statement does not seem consistent with sense; if we are not to conclude that everything that happens has a cause from the general conception (cognition) of that which happens. . . . whence are we to so conclude? The conclusion is in fact a cognition (or recognition) of that relationship known as cause and effect. And it is empirical because a generalization of experience, the general result of common observation in numberless cases—that every known effect has a cause. The principle of causality or as it is usually and preferably written 'the law of causality,' expresses the conclusion that such relationship of cause to effect is a necessary and universal relationship. All conceptions of the mind, or, properly speaking, by the imagination in the mind, if true, real, and sound, must harmonize with sound knowledge received (cognized) by the mind from without; and all

such conceptions are empirical in the sense that the germ of such conception, that is of the knowledge so conceived, must have been first cognized (i.e., received from without) by the mind. We do not say that all cognition must be ordinary cognition, on the contrary we believe that knowledge may be introduced into the human mind at any time by the Creator directly by spiritual agency, and which we should term an extraordinary cognition of that knowledge by the mind, but what we deny is that the mind or mental organization can generate knowledge within itself, of which the germ has not been first introduced into it

The spontaneous generation of animals and vegetables (of animal and vegetable existence) has not been as yet demonstrated; it is now universally, or almost universally rejected by men of science as an undemonstrated theory and most improbable conjecture; in which estimate we quite concur; but the spontaneous generation of knowledge within the mental-organization of man is certainly yet more improbable; indeed the one improbability is so related to the other, that any one believing or admitting the spontaneous generation of knowledge in the human mind cannot consistently deny the spontaneous generation of animal life; for, if the first supposition were true, the last would be at least extremely probable, if indeed not quite a certainty.

The proposition of the spontaneous generation of knowledge if directly presented to the perceptive faculty of the educated mind, as a bare and distinct statement, would be rejected as absurd (in the sense in which that expression is used by Euclid). Therefore any one who, having become unawares possessed of this notion and, having constructed an elaborate system of theories and hypotheses, finds that the whole scheme rests upon this supposition as its basis, must either relinquish the whole as false and untenable or else he must disguise the unreal and chimerical character of his basis. This is what we

incline to think is the actual purpose of the extremely ambiguous, incoherent, and, for the most part, scarcely intelligible propositions and statements we have just put before the reader. We do not intend to say that Kant is here wilfully and purposely deceiving the student; there is manifold evidence in the work that he is quite sincere in the supposition, not only that his (so-called) system is really something belonging to knowledge and to science, but that it possesses value as such in a very high degree. The appearance of system under which this vagueness and incoherency is presented to the student indicates the work of Unreason, to which Kant has subjected himself. Deceit and treachery in the most insidious guise are therefore to be expected. The student is to be attracted by an appearance of definiteness and logical distinctness, is then to be led on by a desire for the profound knowledge and wisdom of which these statements are supposed to be the vehicle; and when he has become entangled in a maze of inconsistencies and utterly bewildered in a labyrinth of paths which, continually intersecting each other, have no apparent commencement or terminus, the fundamental proposition of the spontaneous generation of knowledge is made to present itself again and again with increasing distinctness to his mental vision as the only intelligible mode of egress.

We do not, however, intend these remarks to apply exclusively to the passages now examined, nor yet exclusively to the book now under consideration, but we believe them to apply with more or less force to all (so called) systematic treatises purporting to teach metaphysics.

It might be supposed that in passages such as we have just now examined, the unsense must be so manifest as to deprive them of the power of mischief; but history and experience show that such is not the case; there is much ground for believing that this very work has been the means of partially wasting the lives of many educated men and, probably, of perverting the intellects of some

men of great ability, and through them of exercising a pernicious influence over a great part of the domain of human knowledge.

Let us proceed with the examination.

"Synthetical cognitions from conceptions the understanding cannot supply, and they alone are entitled to be called principles". This seems to be a wholly gratuitous statement, without the support of evidence of any kind; we do not opine that the term understanding can be correctly applied to denote an active faculty or organ for supplying the mind with anything. The true use of the expression, as already stated, is to denote the distinct cognition by the mind of knowledge which may have been presented to it and accepted in a complete state—as an axiom or as a compound demonstrated proposition, for instance—or which may have been arranged by the reason and compounded within the mental organization itself.

If, however, it were admissible to consider it an independent active faculty or organ for supplying cognitions to the mind, its function, we should suppose, would be just that which Kant here says it is not—namely, it would be to supply cognitions harmoniously and regularly compounded of simple conceptions or of elementary cognitions. We say that the authorized meaning of the term understanding belongs to compound knowledge distinctly cognized by the mind, because compounded in such wise as to be intelligible. Dr. Johnson's dictionary will show that to the English word *understanding* this characteristic meaning fundamentally and essentially belongs, and any good German dictionary will show that the same sense belongs to its German equivalent (*Verstandung*). "And they alone are entitled to be called principles." Only a little way back we were told that any general proposition which may serve as the major in a syllogism is entitled to be called a principle; "at the same time all general propositions may be termed comparative principles"; that is to say, in other words, we may no longer term gene-

ral propositions principles (which only a little while before we were told we might do) but we are not debarred from calling them comparative principles.

"It has been a long-cherished wish that, (who knows how late,) may one day be happily accomplished—that the principles of the endless variety of civil laws should be investigated and exposed, for in this way alone can we find the secret of simplifying legislation." The principles of all just civil laws were long since written by the finger of God on tables of stone, and brought down from mount Sinai by Moses, expressly for the information of men, and to furnish them with a sound, reliable and sufficient basis for all human legislation.

"But in this case, laws are nothing more than limitations of our freedom, upon conditions under which it subsists in perfect harmony with itself; they, consequently, have for their object that which is completely our own work, and of which we ourselves may be the cause by means of these conceptions." We are aware that all history and experience teach that men, whose passions and wilfulness are not restrained and limited by obedience to just law, are liable to quarrel with each other; but that, freedom is liable to quarrel with itself, or that it can subsist otherwise than in perfect harmony with itself, is what we are not prepared to believe. Perfectly just human laws must be in perfect harmony with the will of the Supreme Governor of the Earth; with the will of Him, whose service is perfect freedom, because, if the harmony be perfect and the obedience be complete and perfectly willing, the freedom will then be perfect.

"But how objects as things in themselves—how the nature of things is subordinated to principles and is to be determined according to conceptions, is a question which it seems well-nigh impossible to answer." Assuming the objects as things in themselves (we don't see how they can be otherwise) a question suggests itself as to whether the nature of things be indeed subordinated

to principles ? And if this be shown, then, what are the principles to which nature is subordinated ? The last definition we have of 'principles' is that they are synthetical cognitions from conceptions. Now if the nature of things be subordinated to these, it would seem to follow that there must be a great uncertainty about the nature of things.

"Be this however as it may—for on this point our investigation is yet to be made—it is at least manifest from what we have said, that cognition from principles is something very different from cognition by means of the understanding, which may indeed precede other cognitions in the form of a principle ; but in itself—in so far as it is synthetical—is neither based upon mere thought, nor contains a general proposition drawn from conceptions alone." If we assume that this is intended to convey some definite meaning, and make a guess as to what it might mean if put into intelligible language : we would suggest, that the result of inductive combination (reasoning) carried on within the mind itself may differ much from knowledge, such as a proposition (the elements of which are derived from a source outside the mind) which is presented to the mind as a whole and complete combination. But whether Kant has here intended to say something to this effect, we cannot be at all sure.

"The understanding may be a faculty for the production of unity of phenomena by virtue of rules ; the reason is a faculty for the production of unity of rules (of the understanding) under principles." The understanding was at first defined as a faculty of rules. Now, 'it may be a faculty for the production of unity of phenomena by virtue of rules' ; and reason which was formerly the faculty of principles has now become 'a faculty for the production of unity of rules (of the understanding) under principles.'

"Reason, therefore, never applies directly to expe-

rience, or to any sensuous object ; its object is, on the contrary, the understanding, to the manifold cognition of which it gives a unity *à priori* by means of conceptions—a unity which may be called rational unity, and which is of a nature very different from that of the unity produced by the understanding.” On the contrary, reason applies constantly to experience ; for the frequent observations and cognitions by the mind of evidence is experience, and such is particularly the material (so to speak) with which reason works. From the experience of a number of particular cases reason conducts the mind to the general conclusion or judgment. We should say that the carefully observed result of a chemical experiment clearly belongs to experience, and that the subject of chemical science investigated by means of the experiment would belong to sensuous objects. On the other hand, to say that reason has the understanding for its object is to confound language, because the understanding belongs to the mental organization and is that analytical perceptive faculty of the mind by which it distinctly cognizes knowledge. This last paragraph, however, suggests that when Kant writes ‘the understanding,’ he may perhaps mean ‘the imagination’. ‘The application of the reason to the manifold conceptions of the imagination’ would be a phrase quite intelligible.

In works of this description three classes of offences are exhibited :

1. Disregard of verbal science.
2. Disregard of the rules of reason.
3. Disregard of the primary laws of theology.

Each of these is intellectually a very grave offence. The first and second, however, arise primarily from the third ; although apparently the second, *i.e.*, disregard of the rules of reason, is the immediate cause of the mischief.

The rules of reason, in their application to human knowledge, are stated, explained, and taught under two systems ; one of them belonging to the older civiliza-

tion, the other to the modern, namely: Euclid's Ideal Philosophy, taught and illustrated in the work called Euclid's Elements of Geometry, and the Inductive System of Bacon.

These two systems, as we have already explained elsewhere*, when correctly taught, harmonize perfectly, and are, in fact, merely different methods of illustrating and explaining, the same invariable and unchangeable rules. In Euclid's Treatise the application of the system being confined to the subjects of one science only, that of 'Form and Magnitude,' and being applied to those subjects with a close and rigorous adherence to method, the injurious consequences which would arise from even a very slight neglect of the rules of reason, are therein very readily perceptible; for it is evident that, had Euclid left some of his definitions ambiguous and vague, some of his axioms open to doubt and controversy, and his postulates such that the mind would have rejected or hesitated to accept them, the demonstrations would have been imperfect and everything would have been left in uncertainty.

In the practical application of the rules of reason to other departments of Natural Science, the necessity of attention and close adherence to those rules is not so immediately evident. It was, however, clearly shown by "Francis Bacon" that the same necessity did exist in each and all of the Natural Sciences, and that necessity has now been for a long time past distinctly and universally recognized as belonging to the successful prosecution of scientific research in the cultivation of all the departments of Natural Science. But, notwithstanding that the application of Ideal Philosophy to Natural Science has been for so long a time understood, the necessity for its application to Ideal Science has not been, even to the present time, distinctly realized.

* Introduction to the "Circle and Straight Line."

In consequence of the non-recognition of this necessity, writers on certain subjects of Ideal-Science more particularly on psychology and spiritual philosophy, who assume the title and authority of teachers of Science, consider themselves at liberty each to apply rules and methods of his own contrivance. The result is now the same in respect to Ideal Science as it was formerly in respect to Natural Science at the time previous to the application of the inductive system....namely, no real progress is made; each apparent advance is followed after a short time by a falling back almost to the starting place; an occasional increase in volume which seems to promise an unlimited expansion suddenly terminates in a collapse and subsidence to the old level.

One fault, which almost suffices of itself to deprive the works of many of these writers of any real and permanent value, is a neglect to recognize the claim which Science has upon *words*, and the especial duty which belongs to Science to protect and preserve words from being tampered with and misused. All nouns substantive belong to General Science, each of them is the representative of a reality, either of a natural or an ideal reality. In the first instance any one word might be chosen to represent any particular reality, but having been selected, and the choice having been ratified and authorized by Science, that word then becomes definitely related to that particular reality, and the relationship being authorized and guaranteed by Science must not be violated or disturbed. So important is the observance of this rule that, not only the existence of Science but ultimately of all definite knowledge, is dependent upon it, and, if it were not to some extent universally observed and insisted upon, the intercommunication of meaning by language would become difficult and uncertain. But, notwithstanding that the imperative necessity of this strict regard to the inviolability of words is obvious to persons educated in even a very slight degree, so long as

those words are used on subjects to which language is ordinarily applied, it seems to be considered that, on subjects of the most difficult, important and serious character, regard to the definite and authorized meaning of the words is no longer necessary.

We may, perhaps, safely assume that the reader will be satisfied from the examination of the part of Kant's Critique, which we have put before him, that these remarks apply to that treatise. If that be so, the reader may accept our positive statement and assurance that they apply also to all the other metaphysical treatises, and treatises on metaphysics. Some of them are written with a superficial appearance of greater clearness and coherence, but they are not on that account less deceitful and dangerous : quite the contrary.

We have said that the second offence committed by this work (Kant's Treatise) is disregard to the rules of reason. In fact as a reasonable work it has no beginning and no parts, nothing is substantiated, no proposition or statement is demonstrated anywhere throughout the book, and no endeavour, even, to demonstrate anything in a reasonable sense is made, for the necessity to do so is not recognized. It is true that the word demonstrate is used in this book, indeed it is a singularity of this as a metaphysical treatise that a word peculiarly obnoxious to metaphysicians is here brought into service. We find an intention to demonstrate is stated as part of the plan of the book, and occasionally afterwards an assumption that something has been demonstrated ; but the word is used in a metaphysical sense, that is to say it becomes an expression so vague and indefinite as to have no particular and distinct meaning. There is no natural sequence of parts or coherence from inter-relation and dependence of the parts between and upon each other. The book for aught we can see might be separated into divisional parts, and these be arranged in a number of

different ways, without essentially injuring or improving the book as a whole.

The offence of disregard to verbal science may be said to arise from disregard to the rules of reason, because, if the latter had been recognized, the inviolable and exclusive right of each word, expression and phrase, to that essential meaning allotted to it by Science, would have become apparent.

But the great offence—that which is fundamental to the others and out of which they have, at least in great measure, arisen—is disregarded to the primary laws of theology. A practical disbelief in the living God, in the Creator, as the Supreme Ruler over the men that He has made, the world that He has created, and the science that He has arranged. If the positive belief had been possessed by the mind and active therein, reason would have made it plain that many of the subjects which it proposed to investigate were not subjects proper for unauthorized human investigation; and that the plan of the book in regard to its objects was unreasonable and unlawful: unreasonable because unnecessary and certain to be unsuccessful, and unlawful because irreverent and, by implication, rebellious towards God. Moreover, such a practical belief, even though only rudimentary, would have suggested and necessitated the recognition of the probability of some particular revelation of God, and of His relationship to men; consequently any alleged particular revelation believed in by other educated men would have had its claim reasonably investigated and attentively considered.

On reference to Johnson's dictionary we find the meaning of the word—blasphemous —“impiously irreverent with regard to God.”

Now what can be said of the character of a book in which whole sections are headed thus:—“*Of the impossibility of a Cosmological proof of the existence of God.*” “*Of the impossibility of a physico-theological proof.*” “*Cri-*

tique of all theology based upon speculative principles of Reason." If Kant had professed pure Atheism, denied the existence of God, disputed the facts of Creation as such, and based his system distinctly upon the spontaneous generation of knowledge, of reason, of animal existence, and of every thing else, the impious irreverence would not have been so manifest—but neither would it have been so harmful. For a man to acknowledge a Supreme Intellectual Being as his Creator and God, and then, quietly setting aside all considerations of reverence, to set himself to argue whether there be or be not a necessity for any such Being; whether man might not get on just as well without; whether we are not essentially self-existent, owing whatever we have mainly to ourselves and to our own exertions; and whether, after all, the existence of any Supreme Being may not be a mere superstitious notion with which ignorance has infested our minds, or which our imagination has conjured up. We say that such arguments in themselves, whatever the professed result of them may be, constitute a sort of intellectual deliberate blasphemy which cannot reasonably be considered otherwise than as blasphemy of the worst type, far worse and more offensive towards God than any violent and passionate outbreak of rebellion against His authority and government.

So far as a verbal profession may go, Kant himself, almost at the close of his work, declares his belief not only in the existence but even in the particular revelation of God. It does seem indeed that he has, or is under the impression that he has, retained such a belief as a sort of *extraordinary belief*. In one place he expresses a recognition of the importance to himself of retaining this extraordinary belief; that without it he would feel dissatisfied and uncomfortable; and, he states with some degree of distinctness, that he finds his metaphysical philosophy a vain thing to trust to. We have no right or desire to pass any judgement upon Kant as an individual man.

We hope and think that this extraordinary belief may have been of real value and comfort to him ; but we must point out that such professions of religious belief introduced into metaphysical works have the effect only of making them more dangerous and harmful. The student, whose mind is unguarded and unsettled, is thereby led on into the slough. The belief itself appears, perhaps, as an inconsequential conclusion to some vague reasoning, and, at best, the truth is contaminated and defiled by the unsense with which it is mingled. Many persons, we believe, who on the whole disapprove, perhaps much disapprove, such works, are disposed to give them a partial approbation. They express sympathy with the industry and natural ability displayed in them and the evident desire to impart knowledge. But it should be considered that unlawful industry is evil industry, and that wilfulness and lawlessness are at the very root of such works ; they (wilfulness and lawlessness) may indeed be considered fundamental to the disbelief in the facts of theology, for it is they which have ejected, or prevented the mind from laying hold of, such belief. There are apparent evidences in the work that Kant was gifted with talents and ability of high order, it may be of the highest. It is certain that, amongst his predecessors, one at least of the most profound and grandest human intellects the world has ever seen was not less fearfully confounded, and that he is responsible in a higher degree than Kant for the baneful consequences of perverted ability and misapplied industry: consequences which now impede and render well-nigh impossible the acquisition of sound knowledge, by which civilization is endangered, and the intellectual well-being of the human-race collectively placed in jeopardy.

The particular subject of Kant's work is professedly Reason. From the commencement to the end of the work it never seems to have occurred to him that—as the intellectual Guide provided by the Creator for man, and as the medium of communion between man and God, through whom only the knowledge of God can be at first obtained and afterwards perfected, — the spiritual and sacred character of the divine nature belongs likewise to the immediate representative, and that, therefore, reverence and obedience, as well as trustfulness and reliance, are also especially due to Reason.—

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